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Leader Perspectives on Factors that Shape Their Change Leadership Practice

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By

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Abstract

With the abundance of change and leadership research and literature at our fingertips, why do so many change initiatives fail? Is there a connection to leaders' perspectives on what factors inform their change leadership practices, and how do they think about engaging followers in change? This thesis research project leveraged qualitative interviews to explore leader perspectives on what factors inform their change leadership practice, particularly with respect to their approach for engaging followers. To set a theoretical foundation, this project reviews Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) to provide insights to the role that experience plays in the individual learning for leaders. I then look to Argyris & Schon's Theories of Action (1974) to understand how organizational learning enables or hinders change, as well as studies that address resistance to change and follower engagement. The key result of this research is the identification of two potential archetypes of leaders and their approach to change management. Specifically, though all leaders prefer flexibility, there were key differences in the way the two different types of leaders used their experience to shape their change leadership practice, the way the two types of leaders rely on their leadership teams to shape and lead change, and the way the two types of leaders leverage follower data to influence the change.

Keywords: change leadership, organizational change, leadership, resistance to change, experiential learning theory, defensive routine, productive reasoning, Theories of Action, Single-loop and double-loop learning.

Introduction

What shapes leadership decisions about change implementation? My casual observation in professional and social circles has been that those most impacted by changes are often under-represented or altogether absent from the organizational change planning and execution. This observation made me curious about leadership practices around change management. Do leaders look to models of organizational change to plan and execute change initiatives? Is there an opportunity to build leadership knowledge of change management strategies and tactics? What barriers may exist to executing on best practices?

My research studied leader perspectives on how research and literature informs their change leadership practices, particularly around follower engagement in the change process. Preliminary research supports the importance of engaging followers in the change process. Additionally, I have identified a gap in the research; there is a shortage of information identifying leaders' perspectives on factors that inform on their change practice.

Background and Purpose

For essentially the last decade my work has been focused on organizational change in some way. This work ranged from small process improvement efforts, technology implementations, mergers, and organizational realignments. In each of those roles, although I had a position of influence, I was not the leader of the change. In most of these change initiatives, suggestions and recommendations surfaced to gather follower input. In many cases, leadership or members of the project team did not support engaging followers more directly in designing the change or providing input. I found myself frustrated when this resistance occurred, because my instinct and experience told me the direction of the change, the details of the implementation, or the ability to anticipate challenges would be improved by engaging followers.

Simultaneously, I started the Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership at St. Catherine's University. I became increasingly aware of the abundance of business literature on change and leadership. Many of the texts I was reading in my classes included strategies of engaging followers in change. I was puzzled, and admittedly frustrated by this seeming contradiction. Many studies speak to the importance of engaging followers, primarily around activities that empower followers and minimize resistance to change (Bruckman, 2008; Geller, 2002; Erwin, 2009). Consultants and researchers agree that the best approach to engage followers takes more than making a decision on behalf of the followers and communicating it as a directive. (Bruckman, 2008; Erwin, 2009) With the abundance of change and leadership research and literature at our fingertips, why do so many change initiatives fail? I wondered, if we should know better, why don't we do better? My research is aimed to answer the research questions, how do leaders describe their change leadership practice? How do leaders describe their engagement of followers in change? Finally, what role does research and literature play in shaping leaders' change practice, and are there other factors that are more significant influences?

Following the advice of a fellow student, I decided to tackle my frustration with curiosity. I wanted to understand what was going on, particularly what shapes leadership decisions about change implementation. I sought to understand how leaders decide which tactics to use when leading change, how leaders leverage change management strategies and models, and what obstacles leaders face in executing change. I was curious about how leaders were thinking about their approaches to engage followers in change and how I could learn to make better choices myself, how to avoid common pitfalls, and how to help support other leaders in leading change. I wanted to better understand all of these things, and it became clear to me that my goal was to identify how I could help change this dynamic. I set out with this research with a goal to provide

insights that may help leaders seek out the most impactful development activities to hone their change practice, and insights for change consultants supporting leaders.

Literature Review

This section will present the body of knowledge available to inform change leadership practice. I will present current literature on change leadership practices and obstacles, as well as follower needs in the context of organizational change. I will provide an overview of theoretical models of organizational learning that informed my data collection and analysis of findings. Finally, I will describe literature focused on experiential learning in the context of leadership development, and how this relates to organizational learning.

Obstacles for leaders

Leaders face many obstacles when it comes to leading change. Obstacles that leaders face range from complexity of execution to literature that is not grounded in consistent models, theories, or definitions. This section summarizes key obstacles leaders face in their change leadership practice, most formidably, follower resistance to change.

Follower resistance to change

According to Argyris (1998), in organizations, employees are expected to possess the skills and knowledge required to perform their job duties, and leaders are simultaneously responsible to reduce the likelihood of errors (p. 343). In order for employees to perform their job duties effectively, they rigorously adhere to the processes and procedures necessary to perform those job duties without error, creating an inherent resistance to alter the actions that enable job performance (Argyris, 1998, p. 343). In order for a leader to successfully implement change or pursue reduction of error they must understand that altering follower behavior is critical to successful organizational change (Argyris, 1998, p. 343). Several authors have written

about the way leaders support follower needs in the context of organizational change. The following section highlights key themes around the obstacle of follower resistance to change.

One possible approach to address follower resistance to change is to establish consequences for the follower with the intent that the consequences will drive behavior supportive of the change; however, this approach is not effective. Managerial consequence control for employees is not sufficient motivation for followers to embrace and sustain change (Geller, 2002, p. 31). If employees are only committed to the change because they anticipate negative personal consequences if they do not support the change, it is likely they will only take the minimum actions required and nothing more (Meyer et al., 2007, p. 187). This hypothesis aligns to the prior literature in the stance that empowering followers leads to improved change adoption, and supports the notion that consequence control is insufficient motivation for successful implementation of organizational change.

According to Geller (2002), leadership behaviors supporting desired (and individually beneficial) follower behavior reduces resistance change more effectively than managerial consequence control alone (p. 31). Leaders must demonstrate behaviors that empower individuals and enable them to move past consequence control, which is the root of resistance to change (Geller, 2002, p. 46). In other words, leaders that understand how to engage and empower followers in change will see more successful change adoption as opposed to resistance.

It can also be very complex to identify specific leadership behavior(s) that will effectively empower followers, and at times leaders may experience conflicting desires from their followers. Experts agree that the research driven approach of empowering others is an effective tactic for leaders to employ in the change process (Erwin, 2009, Kotter (1996). The goal to empower followers and engage them in the process may be clear, but leaders at times

struggle to effectively do so; furthermore, change leaders must be supported by senior leadership's commitment to the change (Erwin, 2009). Another research driven tactic demonstrated to be effective to empower followers was described as group sessions to establish goals, objectives, and an opportunity to address the quality concerns of the team (Erwin, 2009, p. 34-35).

Although the research suggests that followers should be engaged in the change, leaders may face obstacles where followers indicate that they want to be engaged in the change, meanwhile, they also provide feedback that more specific direction should be given. In his case study, Erwin (2009) describes that although most followers, in this case department managers, indicated they wanted to participate in the process, many requested procedures and protocols and wanted to be provided direction rather than participating in planning the detail of the change (p. 35). In addition to engaging followers in the change, Erwin described the critical importance of the role senior leaders plays in reinforcing the priority and commitment to the change (p. 36). In other words, leaders must empower others to participate in and take ownership for implementation of the change, but must also remain steadfast in supporting the vision and urgency for change.

Another obstacle leaders face is sorting through the sheer volume of management and leadership books or scholarly literature in order to identify best practices and effective change leadership tactics. The leader has a difficult task on their hands to make meaning out of what information is most valuable, what evidence base establishes the tactics presented in a particular publication, and to plan to apply this knowledge to their change leadership practice. There are numerous business and management books on the topics of leadership and change, yet the current research has some consistent limitations (Packard & Shih, 2014, p. 501). Packard and

Shih's work (2014) set out to expanded upon prior research naming effective change tactics. Packard and Shih (2014) wanted to expand upon this prior work to determine what type of evidence was used to identify these tactics in the first place.

The findings suggested that the consistent limitations in the types of evidence used to draw conclusions and establish findings. The most common evidence base was literature review (29% and 28% between the two literature sets), and the author's authority as a consultant, researcher or teacher represented another 27% of the studies. Quantitative methods to obtain the evidence base was found in under 25%. Packard and Shih (2014) suggest that more quantitative evidence would advance future research and that leveraging common frameworks as a point of comparison across studies would improve the empirical evidence base across change research.

From a leaders' perspective, the Packard and Shih (2014) study illustrates that an individual leader has a difficult task on their hands. When the scholarly research is widely varied in reference to frameworks and methods, and there isn't consistent empirical evidence to demonstrate proven tactics, it makes it difficult to know how to apply all of this disconnected and varied information in order to improve upon one's change leadership practice.

Comparative analysis across literature to identify best practices and effective tactics becomes difficult when definitions, models, and theories vary across the literature. Popular management books are generally lacking in empirical evidence and rely too heavily on the author's personal consulting experience or leader case studies, while scholarly literature often provides theory that doesn't account for the full breadth of complex variables a leader must address within organizational change (Packard and Shih, 2014). This leaves a leader with a large amount of information, but without a consistent framework to connect all of this information and an arduous task to draw conclusions that inform their personal change leadership practice.

Defining successful change

A similar obstacle around the ability for a leader to conduct comparative analysis is found when defining successful change. The factors considered in assessing successful change can vary across organizational levels, positions, and activities (Packard, McCrae, Phillips, & Scannapieco, 2015) and the method for assessment, primarily in who is asked to define success, is often limited to leader self-evaluation (Erwin, 2009). Erwin (2009) cites a survey conducted by Isern and Pung (2007) indicating that only 38% of executives surveyed believed their change initiatives were successful, and only 30% believed that their change initiative led to sustained improvement for their organization (p. 28). This is just one example of surveys that gather leader perspectives on the effectiveness of their change initiative.

Time

Finally, one of the most consistent obstacles facing leaders in the context of change leadership, is the constraint of time. Erwin (2009) cited Lewin (1948), Schein (2004), and Kotter (1995, 1996) as authors who all emphasized that effectively executing the change process requires significant time. Meyer et. Al. (2009) assert that change initiatives often have a time bound urgency component. Furthermore, they acknowledge that leadership behaviors that minimize follower resistance to change such as building trust and regular communication are particularly difficult when leaders perceive that there is insufficient time to dedicate to these strategies that simply require a longer period of time in order to be impactful. Many leaders perceive time to be a luxury they do not have in planning change.

Effective leadership behaviors

Leadership behaviors that empower followers rather than focus on consequence control include establishing ownership amongst followers (Bruckman, 2008; Geller, 2002), providing

supportive performance feedback throughout the change process (Geller, 2002; Wong, Cheung, & Leung, 2008), and relying on intrinsic motivations like the competence motive rather than financial rewards which are rarely successful (Bruckman, 2008; Geller 2002).

Establishing ownership within the group is one effective strategy for empowering followers (Bruckman, 2008; Geller, 2002). Erwin (2009) describes an effective strategy in the implementation phase as participative work groups and coaching as follows: "Identifying individuals who were most successful in achieving their goals and using them to coach and support others on a professional-to-professional level appeared helpful" (p. 38) while also acknowledging that in some cases these individuals were accused of overstepping boundaries. Establishing ownership within the group increases engagement and empowerment and may also create an increased need for the leader to remain engaged to support the appropriate messaging and reinforce roles and responsibilities.

A second leadership strategy which has been documented multiple times is the need for supportive performance feedback throughout the change process (Geller, 2002; Wong, Cheung, & Leung, 2008). Erwin (2009) describes an implementation tactic as follows: "honest, clear communication, monitoring performance, and confronting issues" (p. 38) and indicating that this tactic was effective in changing staff behaviors and addressing performance issues throughout the change implementation. It seems that feedback enables followers to have clarity of expectations which enables their ability to meet those expectations.

A final leadership strategy relates to followers' motivation to meet expectations and encourages leaders to rely on intrinsic motivation rather than external motivators like financial rewards. Gellar (2002) and Bruckman (2008) agree that financial rewards are rarely independently sufficient to motivate follower behavior supportive of organizational change. In

other words, when the motivation to succeed with the organizational comes from within the individual, it is much more likely to be successful and sustainable. Again, these strategies align to double loop Model II Theory of Action (Argyris, 1977) described as enabling the following, "high freedom of choice, internal commitment, and risk taking" (p. 118).

Theoretical Framework

This section will explain the four theoretical notions that served to guide my project and provide an important lens in my analysis. This section will describe Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which defines the process of creating knowledge through experience. Next, I summarize Argyris's Theories of Action which provides an understanding of espoused theories as opposed to theories in use and the underlying reasoning that enables these Theories of Action. Finally, I will summarize Single-Loop and Double-Loop learning to describe the way in which an organization can remain stuck in a cycle of ineffective change initiatives.

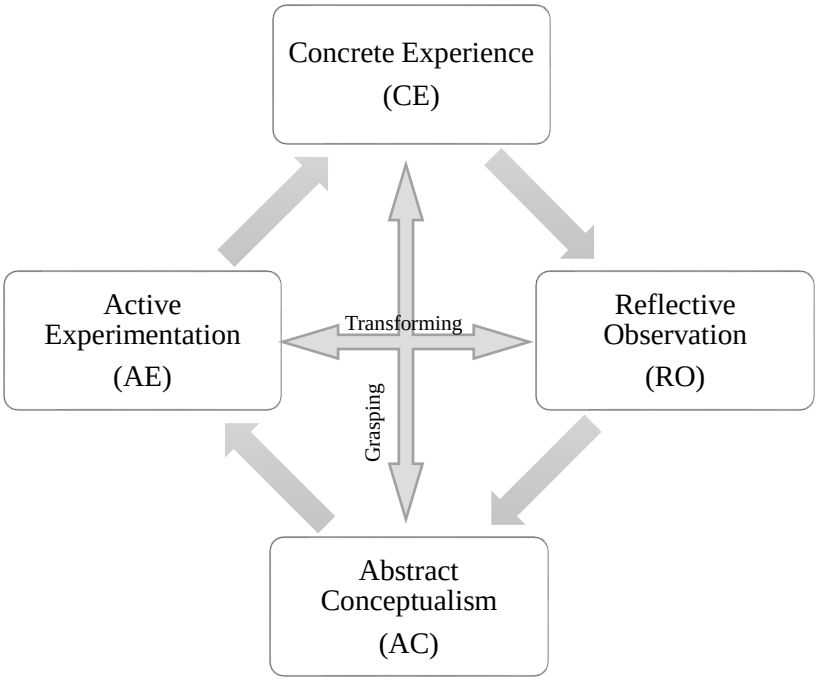
Experiential Learning Theory

One way that leaders design their change strategies is to look to their past experience. The literature refers to this strategy as experiential learning. Research tells us that leaders perceive their greatest learning from their personal experience (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010; Becker & Bish, 2016). The outcome of the leadership development activity of an individual leader has a significant impact throughout the organization, and yet it seems these leadership development activities occur accidentally, to a degree, through the informal learning of everyday experience (Becker and Bish, 2016). Becker and Bish (2016) state, "The most common response to how existing management skills were developed by participants was through their daily work, and the participants overwhelmingly reported learning via trial and error" (Becker & Bish, 2016, p. 570). It seems striking that the most readily available opportunity to learn for any leader would be their

day to day experience, and yet article after article report an observation that organizations tend to focus their efforts toward formal, structured leadership development curriculum. In seeking to understand how experience shapes a leader's change leadership practice, I explored Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory.

Kolb and Kolb (2008) describe Experiential Learning Theory, which explains how individuals turn experience into knowledge through a constantly repeating cycle of 4 modes of learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2008, p. 44). Kolb & Kolb (2008) describe the cycle of experiential learning as two planes made up of opposing modes of learning: grasping experience and transforming experience. The Grasping plane of this model is made of the two opposing modes of Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization. The Transforming plane includes the two opposing modes of Reflective Observation and Active Experimentation. See depiction in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Kolb's Four Modes of the Learning Cycle



Concrete Experience (CE) is also referred to as "experiencing" and describes the way the learner begins to learn through what we're feeling in an experience. This mode is the present moment of what is taking place. Although this is a constantly repeating cycle of learning, I like to think of this mode as the starting point within the cycle, the current moment, or the actual experience that triggers the movement through the rest of the cycle. According to Kolb & Kolb (2008), "Immediate or concrete experiences are the basis for observations and reflections" (p. 44).

Reflective Observation (RO) is also referred to as reflecting or watching. This mode of learning is the learning that occurs when the learner starts to process what has happened or what we experienced in the Concrete Experience mode, and begin to assigning meaning to that experience. This mode is creating observations about what happened. Through reflection, and committing those observations to knowledge.

Abstract Conceptualization (AC) is also referred to as thinking. In this phase, the learner takes those observations and reflections from the RO learning mode, and according to Kolb and Kolb (2008), "these reflections are assimilated and distilled into abstract concepts from which new implications for action can be drawn" (p. 44). The learner is taking observations and reflections and creating generalized concepts or personal theories that can be applied more broadly or tested in future experiences.

The fourth mode of learning is Active Experimentation (AE) which is also referred to as taking action, experimenting, and testing new actions. The learner takes the abstract concepts from the Abstract Conceptualization mode, and applies those concepts to actions, testing those personal theories and turning that experimentation to knowledge. As the learner experiments, that experimentation transitions into a new Concrete Experience, and thus the cycle begins again.

Kolb and Kolb (2008) asserts that a learner can enter the cycle at any of these phases, and that the cycle repeats itself continuously (p. 44). This theory explains the process that is occurring with experiential learning, but it does not provide insight into the value or accuracy of the knowledge that is formed. The model helps us understand the process occurring in the formation of knowledge for the individual learner. In the context of my study, the individual learner is the leader, and the knowledge of interest is their change leadership practice. So how does the individual leader ensure that the process of turning experience into knowledge is occurring in a way that adequately supports effective organizational change?

Theories of action

When leaders seek to initiate change, they undertake a process aimed at making improvements or reducing errors, also referred to as organizational learning. Argyris (1977) describes organizational learning as follows, "Organizational learning is a process of detecting and correcting error. Error is for our purposes any feature of knowledge or knowing that inhibits learning" (p. 116). Argyris (1999) also defines error as follows, "any mismatch between plan or intention and what actually happened when either [plan or intention] is implemented" (p. xiii). In other words, when the organization has goals or objectives and the leader observes that those goals or objectives are not being met, or not being met as planned or intended, this is what Argyris refers to as error. In this sense, an error becomes the impetus of change.

Leaders must determine what actions to take in order to address error. Argyris (1999) explains that our actions are not accidental, but instead are designed (p. 242). To this end, the leader's actions, whether they are effective in execution of change or not, are intentional from the perspective of Argyris. Argyris (1994) explains, "There are two kinds of theories of action. Espoused theories are those that an individual claims to follow. Theories-in-use are those that

can be inferred from action" (p. 242). In other words, espoused theories are what we say we do, whether or not we actually behave consistent with this espoused theory. The theory-in-use is the theory that aligns to our actions. This likens to the colloquialism, "Do as I say, not as I do." The espoused theory is the "as I say" and the theory-in-use is the "as I do". See Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Theories of action

Espoused theory	Theory-in-use
• Understanding in order to explain • What an individual says they do or believe • Composed of values, beliefs, and action strategies	• Understanding in order to take action • What an individual actually does and therefore inherently believes • Stored in our minds in the form of designs that are composed of action strategies, intended consequences organized in causal sequence

(Argyris, 2004, p. 8, Argyris, 1999, p. 244-234)

The potential for espoused theory and theory-in-use presents a dilemma for leaders. It takes a deep level of awareness to understand that what you say you believe may be in contrast with what your actions infer to be your beliefs. According to Argyris (1977), "we found that few people are aware that they do not use the theories the explicitly espouse, and few are aware of those they do use" (p. 119). When a leader takes actions in conflict with the theories they espouse, then it presents an error per Argyris's prior definition. Thus, a leader with espoused theory in conflict with their theory-in-action is also creating a scenario requiring change.

When the role of a leader is to identify and correct error, and yet the leader finds themselves causing the error, self-awareness and acceptance of this fact would undermine the leader's sense of confidence and competence (Argyris, 1998, p. 344). Argyris also argues that leaders with espoused theory in conflict with their theory-in-action are likely to engage in what he describes as a defensive routine. Argyris describes defensive routine as follows: "policies, practices, and actions that prevent human beings from having to experience embarrassment or

threat and, at the same time, prevent them from examining the nature and causes of that embarrassment or threat." (Argyris, 1994). Defensive reasoning both perpetuates organizational defenses and simultaneously hinders organizational learning (Argyris, 2004, p. 2-3). In order to effectively create change, leaders must instead engage in what Argyris describes as productive reasoning (1999, p. 245, 2004, p. 3). See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 Defensive and Productive Reasoning

	Defensive reasoning	Productive reasoning
Characteristics	• Soft data • Inferences are private, often only understood by actor • Conclusions are private in origin and unable to be tested by others • Objective is to protect and defend the actor(s) • Uses self-referential logic: "Trust me, I know what's really going on" • Transparency is avoided in the service of protecting the self and denying that one is protecting the self. • Self-deception is denied by cover-up.	• Hard data • Explains the premise • Explains the inferences stemming from the premise • Presents conclusions tested by independent logic • Produces valid knowledge that is able to be independently validated • Creates informed choices • Makes personal reasoning transparent in order for the claims to be tested robustly • Parties involved are vigilant to avoid unknowingly deceiving themselves and others

(Argyris, 2004, p. 2, Argyris, 1999, p. 245)

In a mindset of defensive reasoning, a leader participates in reasoning that affirms their own actions, or the underlying policies and processes of the organization, in order to defend the actor, avoid embarrassment, and protect the self (Argyris, 2004, p. 2-4, 1999, 245). In an environment where defensive routines are in place, you may see all levels of the organization engaged in resistance. In particular, the leadership team may demonstrate resistance as their power is threatened. Erwin (2009) describes middle and lower level managers as having reactions including the following: "arguments about a lack of need for change, how there was not

enough time to participate, how the change was not a priority, how the numbers and processes were invalid" (p 34). Erwin described these managers' subsequent reflections as follows: "Later, these same managers described their feelings and reactions during this period of time or phase as anxious, defensive, fearful of disappointing, and concerned about their ability to achieve expectations" (p. 87). These descriptions are symptomatic of defensive routines.

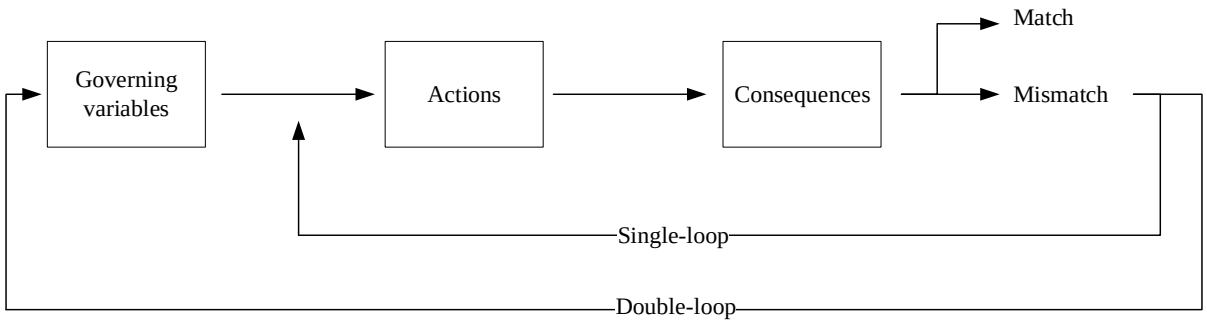
In contrast, productive reasoning is aimed to enable transparency, and validity of conclusions that can be tested independently. When a leader is using productive reasoning, the methods used to arrive at their stated conclusions are clear and able to be reproduced independently. In Erwin's (2009) case study, the CEO demonstrated productive reasoning by leveraging hard data, clearly communicating the evidence, and articulating conclusions that were able to be validated independent of the CEO's personal knowledge and reasoning (p. 31, 33), despite abundant defensive reasoning throughout the management ranks in the organization (p. 31-38).

Single-loop and double-loop learning

In an environment where defensive reasoning is prevalent, a general defensiveness and protectiveness can be observed that is consistent with follower behaviors described in the literature as resistance to change. In this model, individuals will resist anything that threatens the existing processes and norms of the organization. Depending on the nature of the change being proposed, followers may display these systems in an effort to protect the status quo of the organization. Argyris (2009) describes what he calls a double bind in which employees behave in a way that hides errors in order to protect the underlying policies and objectives of the organization, and yet they are in conflict with an opposing norm to identify and correct errors (p. 116).

Ewenstein, Smith, and Sologar (2015) state that "70 percent of change programs fail to achieve their goals, largely due to employee resistance and lack of management support. We also know that when people are truly invested in change it is 30 percent more likely to stick" (para. 1). Research shows that the industry standard tends toward failure in change efforts, and experts cite employee resistance as a critical factor in failed change efforts. Argyris (1977) would argue that the reason that 70% of change efforts fail is because we're using single loop change strategies for change efforts that actually require double loop change strategies in order to effectively establish and sustain the desired change. See Figure 4 for a diagram of single-loop and double-loop learning.

Figure 4 Single-loop and double-loop learning



In single-loop learning, the actor seeks to arrive at a planned or intended outcome and if the desired outcome is achieved, this is considered a match and the theory-in-use is affirmed (Argyris, 1999, p. 243). If they do not arrive at the intended or planned outcome, it is deemed a mismatch or an error (Argyris, 1999, p. 243). In single-loop learning, when the actor identifies error, they first look to alter their actions in an attempt to correct the error (Argyris, 1999, p. 243). The underlying values and norms of the organization, also referred to as the governing variables, are not considered or questioned in single-loop learning. Altering actions is the only path considered in order to accomplish change (Argyris, 1999, p. 243).

Conversely, in a double-loop learning environment the actor may be seeking an entirely different outcome altogether or they may look to the governing variables in order to correct a mismatch (Argyris, 1999, p. 243). A double-loop learning environment is more likely to demonstrate support of change as individuals engage in productive reasoning. In an environment that encourages the sharing of valid information and informed decision making, and where individuals are expected to originate change and growth is pursued above reaffirming existing norms, change is more likely to be embraced as effective organizational learning occurs (Argyris, 1977, p. 118). Questions may be surfaced to open dialog about issues that surface conflict, and in order for double-loop learning to occur, individuals must engage in this conversation rather than perpetuating the defensive routines symptomatic of single-loop learning.

Methodology

I conducted a basic qualitative research study based on semi-scripted interviews in order to explore leader perspectives on their change leadership practice. The primary research question I explored with my research was: How do leaders describe their change leadership practice, particularly, how do leaders describe their engagement of followers in change? The second research question is: What role does research and literature play in shaping leaders' change practice, and are there other factors that are more significant influences?

Data Source

My data source, or participants, are the group of individuals that were eligible and willing to participate in my research study. For a participant to be eligible to participate in my study, they needed to meet the following criteria:

- The participant must work for a medium to large size organization.
- The participant must have responsibility for a hierarchy of at least 200 employees.

- The participant must have experience leading several large change initiatives.

In total, I was able to identify 5 eligible and willing participants for my research. I will further describe challenges I encountered in my recruitment phase later in this section.

In describing my research participants and eligibility criteria, I often use the words "reporting hierarchy." When I use the word hierarchy, I am specifically referencing the multiple layers within the organization under the leader's responsibility. When I use the words "reporting hierarchy" together, I am referencing all of the employees, in all layers of the organizational hierarchy, which have a reporting relationship that rolls up to the leader I describe as a research participant.

I was deliberate in selecting this specific set of criteria. The criteria ensured that I included participants with experience leading significant organizational change efforts. The criteria of working for a medium to large sized organization was important to me for two reasons. First, I wanted to be able to draw parallels to my own experience in a large sized organization. Second, I believe that this size of organization provides leaders with greater opportunity to lead change that has significant breadth and scope, and requires more thoughtful and deliberate tactics to engage followers in the change.

I selected the criteria of requiring my participants to have at least 200 employees in their reporting hierarchy because this is a significant follower population, and I would expect this to align to multiple layers within the hierarchy and therefore more layers between the individual leader and the lowest levels of their hierarchy. I hypothesized that leaders with this scale of reporting hierarchy would not have personal relationships with employees at all levels of their organization, and would therefore need to have developed deliberate methods to engage followers in change if that was in fact a part of their change leadership practice.

Data Collection

I recruited candidates through my personal networks. I created a LinkedIn posting, also called a story, to summarize the scope of my research and the eligibility criteria for an ideal research participant. I shared this story through other personal social media profiles, directly contacted friends and family for leads on individuals within their personal networks, and asked the program administrator at the university to distribute my recruitment materials to current students and alumni. I originally set out to gather 6 to 8 participants to interview to ensure a robust data set.

As I progressed through my data collection period, I found I had overestimated my ability to recruit from within my personal networks. Leaders at the level of responsibility I had outlined within my eligibility criteria, are not generally connections within one or two degrees of my personal network. I believe I would have had greater success had I identified some groups whose membership includes leaders at this level, and solicited their participation in my recruitment efforts. It may have been worthwhile to source a contact list of local leaders meeting this criterion to target via direct invitation. In hindsight, I think I would have had greater success had I started my recruitment exercise with a list of at least 16 potential participants that I had confidence would meet my criteria.

Furthermore, although I have a handful of personal connections in my own organization at that level of leadership, I was deliberate to not include them in my recruitment. Because of the nature of my professional role, I have been directly involved in supporting large change efforts within my organization. I feared that my proximity to those leaders and the changes they had led would hinder my ability to capture the same quality of data from participants known to me, as I would have had personal experiences with the tactics they selected, etc. I feared there would be

things they would not articulate to me because they knew I already knew those details based on shared experience. In the end, I stand by this decision.

My data collection method was to conduct 60-minute individual qualitative interviews, at the office of the participant or on the campus of St. Catherine University. Through individual in-depth qualitative interviews, the interviewer strives to get the interviewee to open up and share their experience in their own words without feeling self-conscious (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, pp. 316-317), and the interviewer is able to gather deeper insight into the experience of the individual through analysis of the interview transcripts.

In total, I interviewed five individuals for an average of 51 minutes. Through these interviews, I inquired about the backgrounds of these unique leaders and their personal experiences leading change through a predetermined set of questions (see Appendix A for interview protocol). I asked questions about how leaders see the limitations, constraints, habits, and opportunities for engaging with followers when envisioning and implementing change. I sought to understand what factors inform their change management practices and the sources that shape their thinking. I was particularly interested in learning their perspectives on involving followers in the change process, and what factors influence the extent to which they engage followers in the change process.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis phase, I had planned to perform open coding by hand, but learned of the Dedoose web-based software. I loaded the transcripts into the Dedoose software, where I reviewed each of the transcripts of the interviews and made notes on themes within the data, assigning codes to individual themes (Creswell, 2016, p. 174). Once I identified those initial themes, I pulled reports to understand the frequency of individual codes within my data. I then

performed another review to identify the quality of the individual excerpts aligned to the codes that were used most frequently before selecting the final themes for my findings. The initial set of findings were a combination of the most frequently used codes, and the highest quality excerpts to support the themes.

After I completed the initial coding and summarized my findings, I reviewed my analysis and findings with my research advisor for additional discussion. The first set of themes I brought to discuss with my research advisor included: Leaders are motivated by a drive to make an impact, the supports leaders utilize impact the tactics they select, challenges influence the leaders change approach, and leaders learn through doing. My research advisor reflected back that it sounded as if I was describing two different types of leaders: leader as expert and leader as instrument. As we discussed further, I concluded this potential categorization warranted further exploration, and I returned to my data to conduct *a priori* coding, coding to align to previously identified themes from the literature (Creswell, 2016, p. 170; O'Leary, 2017, p.330), using these terms. I quickly found this categorization to be soundly supported in the data, and found consistent differences between what was emerging to be two categories of leaders relative to four key themes as described in my findings: soliciting follower input, the role of experience, the role of the leadership team, and preferences toward flexibility in change methodology and tools. This became the central framework for understanding my data.

As I began my research, I did not intend to study the role of experiential learning in shaping the change leadership practice of my participants but as I reviewed the data I collected, it became clear that accumulated professional experience is something that shaped the change leadership approach of my research participants. In the findings section of this paper, I will

expand on the data I collected from my participants on their perspectives on the role experience plays in shaping their change leadership practice.

Participant profiles

I identified 5 eligible and willing participants to participate in my study, each with the type of change leadership experience I was seeking in my participants. All five participants self-identified as Caucasian. The ages of my participants ranged from 42 years old to 63 years old. Three of my participants self-identified as female, and two as male. The years of leadership experience for my participants was a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of over 20 years. Each participant described a career path that included incremental growth and increases in responsibility and accountabilities.

Each of my research participants was asked to describe a specific change leadership experience that they were particularly proud of early in the interview. Although it wasn't my intention, I found that most of the leaders referenced this same example as a point of reference to provide specificity to their responses for subsequent questions. Before describing my findings, it will be helpful to provide a summary of this change leadership example as it becomes a point of reference throughout my findings.

In this paper, I use pseudonyms in order to protect the confidentiality of my participants. Pseudonyms are used for my research participant's names, the companies where they are employed, as well as their job titles.

Mary

Mary is the only one of my participants that comes from a non-profit organization. Mary is the CEO for one region of a national non-profit Mission Driven USA. She has 7 years of experience in her current role and over 20 years of total leadership experience. Mary described

her current level of management as Executive management, and her reporting hierarchy includes more than 800 employees. Mary described her professional experience as starting in retail, growing responsibility, and holding a variety of executive roles in the retail industry. During our interview she stated, "I decided to use my business skills in a mission setting." She moved into non-profit leadership, playing leadership roles for many years and across several organizations.

Mary described a change leadership experience following the Lehman Brother's collapse in 2008. As the CEO of a non-profit she anticipated that the decline of the market and general economic uncertainty would have a negative impact on the revenue for her organization. During our interview, she reported that the organization's expense growth had begun to exceed revenue, and she knew that to maintain the financial strength and stability of the organization, they would need to identify opportunities to save on expenses and earn more revenue. The change leadership example that Mary referenced throughout our interview was related to the change she led her organization through to create financial stability following the 2008 economic crisis. Mary initiated several cost savings initiatives and also established a new program based on the strengths of the organization designed to generate revenue.

Mary describes a transition from business to non-profit stating the following, "I decided to use my business skills in a mission setting." describing intention to make a positive impact for clients. She told me a story of one experience coming into a leadership role in a new organization. Her description of her reflection after this meeting was particularly focused on followers. She stated the following:

> I went home that night and said two things… "I don't know what my emotional intelligence is, but whatever it is, it needs to be higher." Because what's important to these folks is, feelings are really important, and they're really concerned about things I

> wouldn't have guessed. And the second, maybe deeper realization is that all organizations, like all people, are in constant need of healing. Even really good organizations are in constant need of healing.

Throughout her interview, Mary focused on her followers' needs, and what that required of her as a leader. Absent were comments that highlighted her own accomplishments or focused on self-promotion.

Beth

Beth had the largest reporting hierarchy of all of my participants, with 2,221 employees reporting up through her leadership position. Beth was new to her current role as Head of Production with Utility X Inc. at the time of the interview, having been in the role for only 2 months. Beth began her career as a professional in the public utilities industry. She incrementally grew her responsibilities, and pursued leadership roles. She now has a significant reporting hierarchy that includes individuals in roles similar to the work she did when she began her career. Beth's experience spanned several roles in her current organization, and in other smaller organizations in the same industry prior.

Like the other leaders, Beth provided a specific change leadership example early in the interview, but Beth's responses after that point were much more generalized and less specific. Throughout the interview, both with the original questions from the interview protocol and with follow up or probing questions, I found that Beth was less likely to provide specific details of actions to support the approach she described at a high level when compared to the other participants.

Beth described her proudest change experience to be a product of her individual strengths and knowledge. Beth told me, "I got recruited up here to Utility X Inc.… and ultimately took

over the Lead Sub-Production job… just recently was promoted to Director of Production job." Throughout, Beth used language that spoke of her accomplishments in the areas of recruitment, taking over, and a promotion. Later Beth described not having a specific and deliberate plan for her career path mapped out when she began her career, and further described her career progression as follows:

> It was under the general trajectory of "I want continued increases and responsibilities to go experience" and then it's like, "Okay, how do you get the kinds of experiences and expertise that put you in a position to be offered higher level leadership opportunities?" … I think it's also a combination of experiences and capabilities, and then also how you interact with people… If you can't work well with people, other people don't like you, or they don't think that you can do the job, you're not going to get those opportunities to move up.

Overall, Beth described an individual's career progression as tied to accumulation of experiences and capabilities. She highlighted personal accomplishment and likeability as factors that contributed to that career progression.

Bill

Bill also works for Utility X Inc, and in contrast to Beth's position, Bill's role as Senior Plant Manager is focused on management of plants and sites. Similar to Beth, Bill started as an engineer who progressed and grew his responsibility, and in time pursued roles of people management and leadership. Bill possessed a great sense of humility throughout our interview, but it was clear that he began his career with a great amount of technical expertise and as he sought out greater challenges he found his passion for leading people. Bill shared stories of leading several large change efforts with significant people impacts like layoffs and site closures,

which I understand to be some of the most difficult changes to manage based on follower impacts. Bill's current reporting hierarchy includes 500 employees.

Bill had several change leadership experiences that related to closing down a public utilities plant. In each of the examples he provided, Bill assumed a new leadership position and had to implement change leading up to the eventual outcome of plant closure. Throughout these examples, Bill described his increasing awareness of follower resistance to change. Due to the type of change and potential to negatively impact followers' in terms of their employment, Bill certainly encountered a fair amount of follower resistance that he had to learn to overcome.

Bill is a leader with a high level of specialized expertise as a practitioner in his field, and he also demonstrated humility throughout his interview. He described the following, "I kind of like to change jobs about every four years, maybe five, just because I'm one of those few people that like change I guess." When he talked about moving into new roles throughout his career experience he used words like "went onto" and "the company then moved me to" "from there I stepped into" which describe upward movement, but don't cast a focus on his personal accomplishments or attributes as a leader.

Bill spoke of one change experience transforming an operations site and making dramatic improvements to performance by saying, "We were able to accomplish…" and giving credit for the success of the change to his team and not claiming it for himself. Later he takes credit for a goal saying, "My goal was to…" and later saying "we implemented several improvements…now we're at a three-year overhaul cycle." When I asked him if it was something to be proud of, he responded, "The employees were from where they were to where they are today, they are still engaged with working and trying to drive ore improvement, because of that effort." Even when

asked about his personal pride in the success of the change, Bill's immediate response was to talk about the followers.

Paul

Similar to Bill, Paul is in the final stages of leading significant changes to his organization that have included follower impact in terms of layoffs. Paul was unique from the other participants because he began his career in the military. He grew his responsibility and rank, and came to a leadership role before transitioning his career out of the military and into corporate America. Paul has held leadership roles in a handful of retail companies, and has even been a founding partner in a start-up, an experience that he thinks everyone should try at some point. He currently works for a large retail organization, and is passionate about the functional area he leads. Paul's reporting hierarchy is the smallest of my participants at 225 employees.

Similar to the example Bill shared, Paul described an example of change when he took on a new leadership role, but where Bill's experience was moving into a new role in the same company, Paul's experience was as a leader new to the company. Paul acknowledged that he needed to make significant organizational change in his new role, and he also acknowledged that he was coming in without a reputation and established trust, as well as a gap in the institutional knowledge that he would have acquired had he worked for the firm for numerous years.

Paul's story focused on his personal accomplishment and recruitment into his current role. Paul told me, "I was recruited to Retailer Z with the intent of creating a new perspective on the business... I've had the autonomy to kind of bring industry experience from a ton of other retailers, a ton of other operations… I was given clear autonomy to create the organization that I needed to accomplish that role." Throughout this description, Paul focused on his own contributions when describing his proudest moment with change.

Ann

Ann leads a team of roughly 305 employees, and serves as a senior Officer of Finance Inc. Similar to Bill, Ann's responses demonstrated a sense of humility and the pride she described during our interview was focused on the group accomplishments and not her individual contributions as a leader. Although she was the leader of the team and driving the effort, it was clear that her pride was focused on fostering engagement and collaboration. Ann also described the greatest amount of discipline in her change leadership practice. Ann's reporting hierarchy includes 305 employees.

Ann described a significant programmatic change that she led at her company. The change was to dramatically shift the way they approach talent management, career development, compensation, and performance management. This change is unique in that it is intentionally impacting employees directly, and the entire program was aimed to make a positive impact on followers.

Ann described her career progression as follows, "Over the course of my career [I] have grown through HR generalist roles, managers, our senior management roles, and ultimately, today, I am the Chief HR officer." Reference to growth rather than accomplishment is an interesting contrast to the leader as expert category. Later I asked Ann what inspires her approach to change leadership, and she told me the following:

> Fear of failure. There it is, fear of failure… For me, I always, I certainly want to do the right thing, because I want to be successful, but more importantly I am human resources person at heart. You have to do the right thing for people. So the stakes were high and at the end of the day, the whole reason we're doing this is we want each person to have a better experience here.

There is an inherent sense of humility in Ann's word choice, and she describes a focus on the followers that are impacted in contrast with striving for personal accomplishment.

Findings

Through my research I identified four major research findings based on the responses of my participants. My first finding reveals that each of the leaders participating in my study do not rely heavily on change management models or theories to inform the way they lead change. Beyond that initial finding, two groups of leaders emerged amongst my participants.

The remaining findings will be presented as Group 1 and Group 2 to identify differences between the two groups of leaders relative to each finding. The second finding describes the differences in the way the leaders in my study solicit follower feedback to influence the change. The third finding compares and contrasts the way the two groups of leaders in my study rely on personal experience to inform the way they lead change. Finally, I present the way the two groups of leaders in my study rely on the leadership team to inform the change. These findings led me to consider two leader archetypes that I will describe in the Discussion section of this paper.

Flexibility over allegiance to a methodology

The majority of my participants specifically referenced a need for flexibility to select the tools, resources, and overall approach or methodology that best served the individual situation or scope of change, although one participant did seem to prefer the rigor of following a framework or methodology. For this finding the differences in responses were not clearly divided between the leader as instrument and leader as expert groups. The individuals that preferred flexibility seemed to prefer less rigor in order to customize their approach based on the specific needs of

the situation. There also seems to be some perception that flexibility enables the leader to better address the needs of the followers or of their audience.

Mary mentioned the need for flexibility several times throughout the interview. She told me, “In terms of specific tools, I just look for what's going to be relevant at the moment. So, like the empathy map. Oh, wow. That's perfect. That's something new. I haven't done that before. I go online, look at all of the examples. And come up with my own. Boom, boom, boom. That works.” Later she expanded to say, “In the real world, change is not ... at least in my experience, and we're obviously not a Fortune 100 company, change is a whole lot messier than the systems in the best-selling books like to say.” Mary also seemed to describe that being too rigid could actually hinder the leader’s effectiveness when she said, “Don't try to control it, because you can't. But you can lead it. And so, I would say that's the framework that drives my thinking and operationalizing change.” Mary seemed to feel that establishing resilience overall was more important than allegiance to specific tools or methodology.

Beth specifically used the word flexible when I asked her about methodologies and frameworks that influence her change leadership practice. Beth told me, “you have to be flexible, you have to roll with whatever comes at you and keep moving.” Similar to what Mary described, Beth told me “A leader had to have and use a wide arsenal of tactics on approaches. There's the favored approaches, and then there's the, ‘All right, if these things don't work, stuff still has to get done,’ so then I might have to resort to being directive, and that won't be as good.” Beth is indicating that flexibility enables her to be more responsive to the needs of her followers rather than taking a directive approach.

As Bill and I were wrapping up our interview, I asked him if he had any final thoughts or things he wanted to share that he hadn’t spoken about earlier in the interview. He told me,

“Yeah, I don't know. I mean, I have been through a lot of change. They weren't all done the same, each one's a little different.” Throughout the interview, Bill’s responses describe that he is not overly structured in his approach to change and that he trusts his intuition to know the right thing to do. This specific response suggests to me that Bill shares a point of view with most of my other participants in acknowledging that flexibility is more important than following the rigor of a specific methodology.

Paul didn’t speak to flexibility directly, but he talked about not providing too much definition in how he expected the work to be done. He told me, “I typically don’t do a top down plan. I will give guidance around, hey I want us to focus on this I want us to focus on that. Or hey, we have a problem over here to solve.” He described wanting his leadership team to plan the detail and that he didn’t want to be overly prescriptive. He later told me, “What I look for in a perfect scenario is I kind of define kind of what it is we want to achieve, give it a clear guidance to my team on how we’re going to get there, seek their input into the plan.” This second passage feels a bit in contradiction to the first passage. Although this contradiction diminishes some confidence in the first statement, the contradiction itself demonstrates that Paul does not rigidly hold to a specific methodology when executing change and that whether he’s able to articulate it directly or not, he too finds flexibility to be an important part of his change leadership approach.

Ann was the only leader that I interviewed that spoke to valuing the rigor of following a specific methodology, although she alluded to not being the expert on the methodology throughout our interview. Ann described a very deliberate change process as follows:

> We're in the process of doing two more projects now where we're using the same framework discover, design, build, and implement and it's really been, that's probably

> more of a project management, but it leads you to how you're going to talk about the change, you know you're thinking about change through the whole thing. You have to be thinking about it through every phase of that process, because this is really big picture you know all this data, and then you bring it to here, and then you get into design, and it kind of goes like it's a little bit bigger, make it go back, wait a minute what did we say? You know, we had guiding principles. We are constantly testing back to those guiding principles and so, until you finally get to implementation, and we learned very quickly that you have to make it manageable.

In this excerpt, Ann is describing specific phases of the change effort as she describes discover, design, build, and implement and she further describes the way the project team was deliberate in ensuring that they were demonstrating consistency throughout the change effort. Ann later described her approach as follows, "I wouldn't say it's the most formal change management approach," and acknowledged that she'll be an early adopter of a new Innovation and Change program office being established by her organization.

Beyond this initial finding, two distinct groups emerged from the data the remaining findings will be presented as a high level theme, and then a description of the differences between the two groups. Mary, Bill, and Ann align to the group labeled in the subsequent findings as Group 1. Beth and Paul aligned to Group 2.

Leaders solicit follower feedback to influence change

The leaders in my study all described the importance of gathering data from followers in order to help them better understand how to identify opportunities, shape the change, or inform execution of the change. Leaders described varied methods of gathering follower input, and varying formality. Methods varied from formal research tactics to informal conversations, to a

general description of the importance to get input from followers. The first group of leaders engaged followers directly for input, while the second group used indirect methods or was not able to describe tactics to gather follower data.

Group 1 engages followers directly for input

Mary, Bill, and Ann described research-based techniques like surveys and individual interviews as an important aspect of gathering data from followers in order to shape the direction of the change. Mary described gathering data as follows, "we did a survey that the communications folks helped me with. It went out to all 800 employees." Mary further described that the survey request gave some brief description of the overall situation, and asked employees to provide input that Mary described as follows, "where did they see ideas for where we could earn more revenue? Where did they see ideas where we could reduce expenses?" This data demonstrates her belief in the need to gather data from all levels of her reporting hierarchy in order to shape her next steps leading change.

Bill described a more qualitative experience to gather input from followers. Bill established meetings with employees that excluded their manager, with an intention to create more open dialog, transparency, and reveal opportunities that Bill could act upon. He described the significance of these meetings as follows: "I needed that feedback, and honest feedback in order to chart a path, because what that did is it allowed me to basically align those micro-groups toward a common path forward with all the different groups." Bill described these meetings as an opportunity to gather valuable insight to shape and refine the change efforts he was leading.

Ann described the most methodical approach to gathering data of all of my research participants.

> We set a course to gather that voice of employee. So we did that through employee surveys, we did it through interviews… there were different levels of discovery we had to go through in order to assess where we were going to set out priorities, and that discovery was what it was just described. Executive interviews, employee interviews, and employee survey.

Ann's description suggests a well-organized and executed approach to gather data. She later described, "we took that discovery information, tugged and pulled at it in order to set our design phase." Ann described being deliberate about gathering data from followers, and also actively analyzing the data to inform the change itself.

Group 2 indirectly gathers input about follower

Beth and Paul described methods to gather input regarding followers that were indirect or where tactics were not described. Beth articulated valuing gathering data from and engaging all levels of her organization, but her response provides an overarching value she holds, and yet does not provide specific detail to support tactics to solicit follower feedback or ensure engagement in the change. She described her philosophy about follower input as follows:

> I don't like to dictate every little piece of something. Here's where we need to get to. How do I then get your ideas on these parts and your ability? You, deeper in the organization, are part of the team to come up with things and then execute them. Because if you've had an idea, you're invested, it's part of your idea, its part of this whole thing. So you're going to be much more engaged in developing and selling and executing than if you're just told, "Hey, do this thing in exactly this way, at exactly this time, because I said so." That's not the best way to get people's ... win people's hearts and mind to really move."

Beth demonstrated a lot of energy in speaking to why it's important to engage followers in the change. The data suggests that Beth is genuine in articulating this claim, however I was unsuccessful in getting her to articulate specific examples of how she executes on these values within her role.

The way Paul described his approach to gathering data from followers was indirect. This may have influenced Paul's approach to gather data. Paul described performing deliberate observation of followers throughout his interview. He told me,

> Most of the team have been there 15-20 years, so very long tenure... So there was a lot of "we've always done it this way," and so one of the things that I was mindful to is I just need to sit back and observe. I really just wanted to see how the team was operating, kind of what I call their battle rhythms were, what is their structure, what does their day look like? Is it meeting focused? Is it kind of problem solving? Is it responsive? Are we just looking at reports? All of those things. So for the first 90 days, I really just sought to understand.

Paul did not describe asking his followers directly for input, and did not describe specific methodology to record and analyze his observations. Paul described being deliberate in defining what he was seeking to observe and that he intended for his observations to shape his next steps in leading change.

Personal experience shapes change practice

The leaders that I interviewed referenced their past experience as a significant factor that shaped their change leadership practice. Each one of the leaders that I interviewed had an impressive resume leading to the leadership responsibilities of their current roles. Each one of the leaders had demonstrated growth in responsibility and an upward motivation in their pursuit

of career opportunities throughout their career. For each of my participants, they had a sufficient depth of experience leading change to draw upon and shape the way they choose to lead change in the present. Leaders in group one spoke of experience as a path to improving their leadership approach. Leaders in group two described experience as a path to expertise, or a measure of talent.

Group 1 describes experience as a path to improvement

Mary talked about reflection and mindfulness as shaping the way she understands her experience and allows it to shape her future actions. She told me, "That's part of mindfulness, which is an approach for me in helping others also slow down. How to be mindful. Knowing we can't change reality, so then how do we look at the why? Why do we make this tough choice and why is it better than the other choice." Mary expressed some deliberate reflection practices that shape the way she leads as follows:

> "I'm also doing some specific reflection being here seven years this month, and thinking about, which I'm gonna write up, what are the big things that have been accomplished? What were the challenges when I walked in? What have been the biggest challenges where I've made the biggest progress? And what do I wish I had done? What I hadn't done? And how can I do that now?"

Mary described regularly incorporating reflection into her change leadership practice.

In order to understand how Bill thinks about self-improvement as a leader of change, I asked Bill, "What sorts of experiences do you seek out as a leader, to facilitate your own professional development around leading change?" He responded, "Usually, the deep end of the pool. That's kind of how it's been. Well I shouldn't say that," and he explained that his organization does require leaders to complete formal development plans each year. He also went

on to describe a development assignment stating, “I got a hands-on experience doing the role, and so when the opportunity presented itself, it not only allowed me to get a peek into see if it’s what I really wanted to do, but it gave me the experience I needed to get into the role.” Bill described appreciating the knowledge he’s gained through experience, and that it’s enhanced his skills as a leader to enable promotion opportunities.

Bill also described a mentor relationship that enables the ability to learn from his experience. Bill explained, “That mentorship has really helped. Actually, my boss that was at [location], he’s retired, and I still meet with him periodically just to get his thoughts and ideas, because he was really good at it.” Participating in a mentor relationship is one way Bill described reflecting upon his experience and processing what he learned.

Ann is the only one of my participants that specifically referenced leveraging a professional coach. When I asked her that same question about the experiences and resources she pursues for her professional change leadership development, Ann responded, “The last five years, we [the leadership team] meet quarterly, we do large group coaching, we do small group peer coaching, and then we have individual coaches… That individual coach, for me, can be something personal to me if I want to speak to them about coaching or I can use that coach to just help me think through things.” Ann’s professional experience included other change leadership experiences, and she pointed first to the value of the coaching and not to the value of her accumulated experience.

Group 2 speaks of experience as a path to expertise

Beth spoke passionately about the value of personal experience. I asked Beth, “What experiences or resources do you personally seek out that really help to shape and inform your change practice?” Beth responded, “One thing is hard-won experience. You do things, you try

things, you see personally what has worked for you or what hasn't worked for you and then you learn from that. And you continue to evolve your approach based on that." Beth doesn't describe reflection in the same way that Mary did, but she does describe evolving her practice based on experience which suggests that she does in fact do some level of reflection in order to identify opportunities to evolve or improve her approach. Beth also talked specifically about the role experience has played in the accumulation of personal accomplishment when she said the following:

> I would say over time I've developed a lot of experience that has shown me that I can count on myself and core capabilities. Core leadership approach translates between whether you know a particular business or not. But if you have that kind of authentic approach and you can pick up the specifics of whatever it is, you can lead and inspire and move people. But you have to trust yourself and it takes time to get that confidence and that confidence comes from experience.

Beth described personal experience and expertise shaping the way she leads change.

Similarly, Paul specifically acknowledged that he thinks the importance of experience leading change is an advantage that he feels is often underestimated. He stated,

> I think as we get through change leadership and management, there's an exposure to being involved in change that starts to break down paradigms and break down challenges, just like anything else. You start to become a little more comfortable at it. You begin to understand it more, how to be successful in change, and I think that's sometimes overlooked.

In this statement, it is clear that Paul values the expertise gained through repeatedly leading change and having the ability to learn from that experience. Again, although Paul does not

specifically describe a reflective process, but Paul did describe seeking feedback in order to improve his change leadership as follows: “I’m also open to do is leverage my peers, in many cases… I say, “Here’s what I’m thinking. Keep me honest. What are your thoughts?” Seek that feedback to kind of see how we’re attacking the problem of if this change is actually needed.” Paul is describing his process to gather additional feedback in order to validate his approach.

The leadership team shapes the leader’s change leadership practice

Each of my participants reported that they leverage their leadership team as a source for strategy development, critical sounding board, and instrument for the execution of change. Most of my participants not only referenced, but made repeated reference to their leadership team throughout their interview. The data indicates that my participants see the leadership team as a critical element in the execution of change. The first group of leaders described enlisting their leadership team in order to shape the change. The second group of leaders spoke of enlisting their leadership team in order to execute the change.

Group 1 enlists leadership team to shape change

Mary described a situation where she pulled her leadership team into the planning phase of a change she anticipated was necessary. She reported, “I brought them [her leadership team] into the conference room and we had a discussion around values. And they wanted the decisions to be values driven. I really invited them into the process. And, it was really an effort to share the decision making and have it be collaborative and to listen to people and give them an opportunity for voice.” In this example, Mary is leveraging the leadership team as a voice for the follower population as a whole, and references creating a collaborative environment to design the change.

Bill again spoke to leveraging his team to inform the early planning phases of leading change. Bill described engaging his leadership team as follows: “You don't have a plan yet, but

where are you taking this? And then involving my leadership team, and involving them, and making sure they fully understand what this vision. Do we need to change it? Am I not seeing it right." In this description it's clear that Bill is leaving opportunity for the leadership team's input to change the trajectory of the change.

Later, Bill told me about the format for his leadership team meetings stating, "We utilize that time as well to openly discuss where we think we need change, or where we need training, not only us, but as an organization." Bill relies upon his team not only for feedback as he's planning for change, but also in soliciting ideas for new change that may be needed.

Ann specifically articulated the importance of building her leadership team to ensure that they enhance her own strengths and offset her weakness as an individual leader. She described herself as follows: "I'll admit I'm a process person, I like process. I'm an operations girl all through and through, it's my tendency. What's the project plan, who the project leader is, tell me what your milestones are, I like that though because you see progress." She continued to tell me, "I always surround myself with people who are going to challenge me to think about, "How are you going to actually explain that? What's going to resonate with people?" Ann described her leadership team as an opportunity to build a collective force with a more robust and diverse skill set. She described the strength of a team with diverse skills to be more powerful than the strength of the skills of an individual leader.

Group 2 enlists the leadership team to execute change

Beth has the largest sized reporting hierarchy, and referenced the depth of her organization and the importance of leveraging all levels of leadership in the change. Beth told me:

> You have to get your own team on board and have them help sell your vision, your message, your approach. The whole chain of command is there for a reason. You have to engage all of your levels of leadership. So with a 2500 person organization there's a lot of levels of leadership in there. You need to get everybody on the same page and that takes personal interaction. That's the most effective. If you could show up in person to everybody, but that's obviously hugely time consuming, so you have to, in my mind, again, have this ... Multi-faceted is probably a big theme of mine in general.

Beth later described an expectation that the leadership team represent her vision of the change:

> I would say I fully expect things to cascade. I expect my leaders to model, ideally model their approach on the tone I've set, giving it their own spin. Because everybody has to kind of ... To lead authentically you have to lead from what is comfortable for you. But I fully expect and make it clear, the expectation is yeah, we're have to get to this place and so I need your part of the organization to figure this out, so go figure it out. Then come back to me with status, with ideas, with whatever as we progress through the whole thing.

The way Beth describes leveraging her leadership team in this instance is less collaborative than the way the leaders in the leaders as instrument category describe engaging their leadership team.

Paul did not provide as much detail on how the exchange of information takes place with his leadership team, but he explained that they're a part of the process when he said, "My immediate leadership team has to be part of the plan. I give the guidance, again the left and right limit and they execute against that." Paul described expecting his leadership team be able to understand their boundaries, and then to feel empowered (and accountable) to determine independently how to best execute against those expectations. Paul did not describe the

leadership team being engaged to help set highest level priorities, in fact he's saying he sets the direction and give them boundaries in which to operate.

Discussion

This qualitative research project identified two potential leader archetypes that emerged in relation to how leaders describe their change leadership practice. While all leaders prefer flexibility to utilize the methodology and tools that best serve the specific change, one group of leaders spoke of experience as a way to improve their practice, directly engage followers to inform the change, and leverage their leadership team to shape the change. The other group spoke of experience as a means to build expertise, indirectly gather follower data, and leverage their leadership team to execute the change.

My findings also suggest critical relationships between Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2011), Theories of Action (Argyris, 1994), Defensive and Productive Reasoning (Argyris, 1999), and single- and double-loop learning (Argyris, 1999). These relationships were further strengthened by two leader archetypes that emerged based on the behaviors described by my participants: leader as instrument and leader as expert. This section will describe the leader archetypes in relation to my findings, and the relationships I identified between the leader archetypes and the underlying theoretical notions in order to explain how these archetypes and leader behaviors relate to effective organizational change.

Leader as instrument vs. leader as expert archetypes

As described, my data analysis revealed consistent differences in the data that divided the leaders into two groups. Two leader archetypes emerged from the data. Following my advisor's lead, I continued to label the two groups as leader as expert and leader as instrument. As I summarized other themes from my data, I found these two groups to have consistent responses

amongst the other members of their category, and generally a notable difference from the responses of the members of the other category. In order to best describe all of my findings, I use these two categories to compare and contrast the data relative to each finding. The single point of common perspective amongst my participants was valuing flexibility over adhering to the rigors of a specific methodology. From that point forward the responses of the two groups demonstrated some specific differences.

There were notable differences in the way the two groups of leaders described soliciting follower feedback to influence the change. Paul and Beth both stated beliefs about the importance of engaging followers in change. Paul contradicted himself when he stated that followers should be engaged in the change, and later described a directive approach. Beth did not contradict herself, but she did not describe tactics to engage followers. This data all suggested to me an example of the leader as expert demonstrating espoused theory to engage followers in change that is in conflict with their theory-in-use that is more independent and directive.

Each of my participants in the leader as instrument archetype described some deliberate effort or support in making meaning from their experiences. I look to the reflective observation stage of experiential learning and the transition into abstract conceptualism. As the leader makes this transition, the supports or deliberate effort impact the quality of the concepts and theories the leader creates to make meaning of their experience. The leaders in the leader as instrument group each described some deliberate process or supports in making meaning from their experience. The meaning making transitions into the active experimentation stage, and thus the meaning the leader makes from their prior experiences shapes the quality of their future actions. The deliberate actions of the leader as instrument group suggest higher quality, and

independently verifiable conclusions would be formed through the reflective process engaging external inputs that they described.

In contrast, the leader as expert group described only basic reflection and solicitation of feedback without description of how they questioned or analyzed this information. This focus on the leader's individual strengths could be particularly problematic as a foundation for defensive reasoning. Although the data collected in this research did not provide enough evidence to identify defensive reasoning patterns directly, it stands to reason that when a leader believes that the strength of their personal experience drives their efficacy in leading change, it may follow that the leader would also feel inclined to defend the self rather than to question organizational problems that may be at the root of the issue. This pattern aligns to defensive reasoning, and the leader as expert may be more likely to engage in this form of reasoning.

There were also significant differences in the way the two leaders described the engagement of their leadership team. When Bill described holding meetings with the employees reporting to his direct reports, he described elements of productive reasoning. He leveraged others to gather data, and to collectively establish conclusions that can be publicly validated. Bill, Mary, and Ann each described engaging their leadership team in conversations to identify opportunity and shape the strategy. Each of these leaders described behaviors that are consistent with double-loop learning in deliberately seeking out opportunities that include changing the way they approach work for the organization and inviting opportunities for new learnings. Creating this environment encourages all participants to establish new norms of inquiry and reflection.

In contrast, both Beth and Paul, the leader as expert group, suggested setting some specific guardrails, expectations, or modeling and then expecting the leadership team to execute within the boundaries they had set. Both leaders also describe behaviors that suggest espoused

theory in conflict with their theory in use. Beth articulates the importance of engaging followers in the change, but also articulates that she is modeling the behavior and setting the message she expects to cascade. These are conflicting ideas, and represent that Beth may believe she engages followers in change or that this is a value in her leadership, yet the details seem to support that her theory-in-use is more directive. See Figure 5 below for a summary of the findings relative to the leader as expert and leader as instrument categories.

Figure 5 Leader as expert versus leader as instrument

	Leader as expert	Leader as instrument
The role of change management models, theories, and tools	• Speaks to preference of flexibility • Demonstrates elements of defensive reasoning	• Speaks to preference of flexibility • Identifies specific tools and methodologies that they use
Soliciting follower feedback to influence change	• Espoused theory to engage followers is in conflict with theory-in-action • Follower input gathered through observation	• Theory-in-action follows research-based practices to engage followers • Follower input gathered through survey, interview, and focus groups
The role of experience	• Describe experience as the means to attain expertise • Infers some basic level of reflective practice or request for feedback	• Describes formal or structured experience with mentorship, coaching, or reflection and mindfulness to make meaning of experience • Demonstrates elements of productive reasoning
The role of the leadership team	• Models behavior for leadership team to replicate; reinforces defensive reasoning • Leadership team engaged to support delivery and execution of change as prescribed by the leader • Demonstrates elements of defensive reasoning	• Leadership team engaged to participate in development of strategy and approach as well as the execution of change • Demonstrates elements of productive reasoning

Relating theory to leader archetypes

My findings lead me to consider a few critical points. As cited previously in the literature review section, research demonstrates that even leaders believe their change efforts fail the majority of the time. Argyris (1977) would suggest that the reason organizations remain stuck in a pattern of unsuccessful change is because they are using single-loop strategies to solve double-loop problems. The way in which we execute change, particularly under the leader as expert, is riddled with self-affirming and defensive reasoning. In the concrete experience phase of experiential learning, it becomes clear when a leader's espoused theories are in conflict with their theory in action and the result is defensive (or unproductive) consequences that perpetuate a feeling of helplessness or inability to create change because of external factors.

Argyris (1977) explains some of the ways in which leaders and organizations as a whole remain stuck in learning patterns that do not facilitate improvement and change within their organizations. Argyris (1977) states the following regarding his own research findings:

> We found that few people are aware that they do not use the theories they explicitly espouse, and few are aware of those they do use. If people are unaware of the propositions they use, then it appears that they design for themselves private assumptions that are not genuinely self-corrective. Thus they are prisoners of their own theories. (p. 119)

My findings align with the findings Argyris describes in this passage. As documented in the findings section, leaders in the leader as expert category, Beth and Paul, demonstrated behaviors of defensive reasoning in the way they describe drawing conclusions based on personal observations and drive change strategy from those conclusions. Additionally, Beth and Paul

both point to their unique expertise as a critical element of their change leadership, demonstrating self-affirming behaviors.

In contrast, when leaders see themselves as instruments of change they are able to wrestle with the underlying problems of the organization, without a focus on self-protective defensive reasoning. They are more interested in arriving at truth and independently verifiable conclusions based on hard evidence. Another critical aspect is the importance of the quality of the leader's reflective observation stage of experiential learning and the transition into abstract conceptualism. With increased discipline in these phases, the quality of the concepts and theories the leader creates to make meaning of their experience should also improve. As the leader transitions into the active experimentation stage, they rely on the personal theories and concepts they created in the abstract conceptualism stage, and again the meaning the leader makes from their prior experiences shapes the quality of their future actions. This deeper analysis allows leaders to consider adjusting governing variables in the active experimentation stage, and this can lead to what Argyris (1999) describes as effective action, which is when we achieve the intended result of the organizational change (p. 13).

In order to maximize the impact of this cyclical learning, we should acknowledge that higher quality actions in any stage will produce higher quality output as the leader transitions through subsequent stages. The power of the quality of the individual leader's experiential learning ripples through the organization. Furthermore, when we know the leadership team is expected to model the leader's behavior under the leader as expert, we must acknowledge the potential negative organizational impact of an individual leader's defensive reasoning and espoused theory in conflict with their theory in action.

In summary, my findings suggest that a leader's personal experience through organizational change follows the phases of the Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb & Kolb, 2011). My findings also suggest that the leader archetypes displayed behaviors consistent with elements of Theories of Action (Argyris, 1994), Defensive and Productive Reasoning (Argyris, 1999), and single- and double-loop learning (Argyris, 1999) throughout those phases of experiential learning; each of these theories articulates behaviors that enable or hinder effective organizational change. I have aligned the behaviors demonstrated by each archetype to the phases of experiential learning in the table below in order to describe how the leader's actions enable productive organizational change or ineffective organizational change. See Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 Effective and ineffective change leadership behaviors

By shifting leader behaviors phases from leader as expert toward leader as instrument throughout the experiential learning, the leader should theoretically experience improvement in the efficacy of the organizational change.

Ineffective change leadership behaviors **Leader as Expert** *Leader as Expert demonstrates behaviors theoretically aligned to ineffective organizational change.*		**Effective change leadership behaviors** **Leader as Instrument** *Leader as Instrument demonstrates behaviors theoretically aligned to effective organizational change.*
Reflective Observation		
Defensive reasoning	v.	Productive reasoning
• Relies upon soft data • Observations are subjective, relying on un-validated intrinsic perspectives • Protects self		• Relies upon hard data • Observations are objective and may incorporate external perspectives • Pursues "truth"
Abstract Conceptualism		
Self-affirming action strategies	v.	Independently verifiable conclusions
• Affirms own actions • Protects self; prevents embarrassment • Internal premises and inferences personal to actor		• Can be tested for validity • Transparent; aims to avoid deception • Premise and inferences are clear to any independent actor
Active Experimentation		
Adjusts actions only	v.	Strives to adjust governing variables
• Preserves underlying norms • Enables single-loop learning		• Aims to adjust underlying norms • Enables double-loop learning
Concrete Experience		
Defensive consequences	v.	Productive consequences
• Mismatch; result is not as intended • Espoused theory ≠ theory in use • Followers feel "stuck" or helpless and subject to external factors		• Match; intended result is achieved • Theory in use is affirmed • Followers experience shifting organizational norms

Recommendations

This study into how leaders think about factors that inform their change leadership practice leads to two recommendations. The primary recommendation is to incorporate productive reasoning into the change leadership practice for all leaders. Learning from experience is part of the human condition, and the question should not be if but how that learning occurs. I believe it is essential for leaders to understand the importance of the reflective observation and theoretical conceptualization phases of experiential learning, and how to leverage productive reasoning to produce more effective organizational change leadership behaviors. When this occurs, the opportunity for leadership growth and development has potential to be exponential as the circular process of experiential learning continues to build upon itself. To enable productive reasoning, I suggest the following questions for leaders to incorporate into structured reflection:

- What hard data or evidence is available to help inform decisions?
- What initial conclusions are being created from the data? What supplemental conclusions are based upon those additional conclusions? Do these conclusions drive to adjusting actions, or overarching themes amongst the organization?
- Describe the logic, or sequence of declarative statements that bring you to your final conclusion. Do you see any patterns that need to be further refined?
- What opposing views were considered? Why were those conclusions ruled out?
- What perspectives were engaged in order to arrive at the final conclusions? Are there any perspectives or stakeholders (including followers) that did not have visibility or contribution into the conclusions? Should additional steps be taken to incorporate additional perspectives?

An additional recommendation is directed toward for individuals playing roles as change consultants who support leaders in leading change. I recommend that individual change consultants consider their role as a facilitator of experiential learning. Based on my findings, I see incredible opportunity for organizations to provide better supports for leaders that may encourage productive reasoning processes. These same questions can be used in conversation with leaders throughout the planning, execution, and completion of organizational change.

My final set of recommendations are related to suggestions for future research. First, a repeat of this study with a more robust leader sample would be a wise first step. Furthermore, I think this topic is well suited for a combined qualitative and quantitative study. The qualitative aspect of my research allowed me to uncover powerful findings and I think this could be strengthened by incorporating quantitative data which would enable the potential for findings that could be generalized more broadly. Additionally, this study gathered leader perspectives, but there is very limited information from the follower perspective. If I were to re-design this study, I would consider gathering feedback from followers as well as their associated leader, relative to a specific change initiative.

Finally, my research did not include any measures of success for the change initiative overall. Although I captured the perspectives of a small sampling of leaders, it is possible that the leaders that participated in my study do not effectively drive impactful positive change for their organizations or the industries in which they work. In addition to gathering a more holistic representation of perspectives on change leadership practices, I would also strive to establish some evidence of effectiveness of the change initiative.

Conclusion

I set out to do this research hoping that the findings of this study would provide insights that may help leaders seek out the most impactful development activities to hone their change practice, and insights for change consultants supporting leaders. I believe that my findings have pointed us in the direction of some specific development for leaders to pursue such as deliberate reflection, feedback and coaching on their change leadership experience to ensure that the maximize the benefit of any lessons from that experience.

This study has demonstrated to me that effective change leadership is far more complex than identifying the right methodology and applying it. The leaders that I spoke with described surprises, nuances to be addressed within the needs of the followers they were leading, and a diverse set of experiences, education, and organizational supports from which to draw upon. The leaders I spoke with never spoke negatively about structured leadership development, but it became clear to me that all of the learning that shapes the leader's change leadership practice draws upon both the structured and not-structured learning. I will be incorporating more structure into my personal reflection based on my learning style in an attempt to maximize my ability to have awareness of learnings that may be harder for me to identify without the deliberate structure.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interviewer:
Pseudonym assigned:
Other Topics Discussed:
Documents Obtained:

Leader perspectives on change leadership Interviews

Introductory Protocol

Start with introductions and thank them for agreeing to interview. Then, walk through the consent form. Then say:

Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) there is no foreseeable risk to you for participating in the study.

Do you have any questions?

If you agree to participate, please sign the form; if not, we can end the interview.

Thank you for your agreeing to participate.

I have planned this interview to last no longer than 90 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. I have arranged them in a semi-scripted format, which means that we can move around through the questions, and may not follow the questions exactly, but will stick to the topics I have approved for my research. If time begins to run short, I will do a time check and we'll decide together how to adjust.

Introduction

> You have been selected as someone I wanted to interview for my research because I would like to understand your perspectives on your change leadership practice and what factors have shaped your practice over time. My research project focuses on the improvement of change leadership practice and research, with particular interest in

understanding how followers are engaged in change initiative planning and execution. My study does not aim to evaluate your techniques or experiences. Rather, I am trying to learn more about your perspectives of your personal practice, and hopefully learn about change leader practices that help improve leadership of change initiatives and follower experience overall.

A. Interviewee Background

Tell me about your educational background and your career path into your current role.

B. Change experience

Tell me about the experience leading change that you are most proud of.
What were the most effective actions you took to lead change?
Which plans didn't turn out so well?

C. Change Leadership System

Describe the change management supports in place in your organization? Who participates in the process?
What tools and resources are available to you as a leader? To your team in adopting change?
How does that shape your change leadership practice?

D. Change leadership development

What experiences or resources do you seek out to facilitate your professional development around change leadership?
How has this changed over time?
What actions do you expect your team to take to facilitate their own professional development around change leadership?
What inspires your approach to change leadership?

E. Change leadership vision

How do you define "change leadership"?
If you accomplished your vision of change leadership in your organization, what would it look like?
How would you see followers engaged in the change process?

F. Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

Appendix B: Consent Form

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Leader Perspectives on Change Leadership
Researcher(s): Michelle Shields
You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called Leader Perspectives on Change Leadership. The study is being done by Michelle Shields, a Masters' students at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Sharon Radd, Ed.D., Asst. Professor, MAOL at St. Catherine University. The purpose of this research is to understand leader perspectives on change leadership in order to identify practice/research gaps around change leadership and follower engagement in the planning and execution of organizational change. This study is important because it will help to identify gaps in practice or research on the topic of change leadership. Approximately 6-8 people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?
You have been asked to be in this study because you responded to an ad, and indicated you are a leader in the private/for-profit sector with experience initiating change, and have over 200 people in your reporting hierarchy.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?
If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- Provide basic demographic data attached to this consent form (10 minutes)
- Participate in an in-person or virtual interview (60-90 minutes)
- Be available for follow up questions or clarification as needed (0- 20 minutes)

In total, this study will take approximately 90 minutes over 1 session.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. You may withdraw until September 1, 2018, after which time withdrawal will no longer be possible. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

No foreseeable risks have been identified for this study.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this research.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?
You will not be compensated for participating in this study

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?
Interviews will be audio recorded, and the audio will be transcribed. If a transcription service is used to transcribe the interviews, the transcription service selected will operate under a confidentiality policy. Each interview participant will be assigned a pseudonym, and the participant's name will not be attached to the transcript from their interview. The information that you provide in this study will be assigned a pseudonym, and the pseudonym key will not be stored with the research data. I will store audio files and electronic files on a password protected cloud. I will store all paper files in a secure location, locked in a file cabinet in my home, that is accessible only to me while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by November 2018. I will then destroy all original reports, transcripts, audio recording and identifying information that can be linked back to you.
Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in the any written reports or publications.
Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?
If during the course of this research study I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings.
How can I get more information?
If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at 612-414-2932 or mashields@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Sharon Radd at 612-600-5420 or siradd@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:
I consent to participate in the study and agree to be audiotaped.
My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher(s).

_____

Signature of Participant Date

_____

Signature of Researcher Date